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Fourth Annual Report

ALBERTA LIBRARY BOARD 1981/82

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GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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ALBERTA LIBRARY BOARD

The Honourable Mary J. LeMessurier
#402 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Madame Minister:

In accordance with The Libraries Act, I have the honour to present to you the Fourth Annual Report of the Alberta Library Board for the year ending March 31, 1982.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucille C Dougherty

Lucille Dougherty
Chairperson

LD/bb
cc: J.S. O'Neill

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BOARD MEMBERS

Elaine Blakey, Red Deer ● Merron Chorny, Calgary ● Lucille Dougherty, High River ● Dr. Christopher Gordon-Craig, Edmonton ● Ron Hodges, Edmonton ● Jean Lewis, High Prairie ● William Schieman, Medicine Hat ●

Fourth Annual Report of the Alberta Library Board for the year ending March 31, 1982.

The past year has been a very busy and productive one for the Alberta Library Board and I thank the library community of Alberta for their co-operation and assistance in making it a rewarding one.

Board Membership

Early in the year, the Board welcomed two new members to its ranks. The first, Jean Lewis, from High Prairie has served on the Alberta Library Trustees Association Executive and is currently a member of the municipal library board in that town and the Peace Library System Steering Committee. She has also been active in local politics. The second, Elaine Blakey, is a teacher-librarian in Red Deer and was actively involved in the Yellowhead Regional Library when she lived in Mayerthorpe. At the same time, Gaye Ross, Vice Chairman and Eve Whitmey, members since 1978 retired from the Board, and are pursuing careers in municipal politics. Libraries of Alberta owe a debt of gratitude to their continuing commitment to library development. Lucille Dougherty was elected Chairman and Elaine Blakey Vice Chairman.

Co-operative Library Systems

The development of co-operative library systems continued to be a major priority of the Board. After extensive consultation with the library community on the "Working Paper on the Development of Co-operative Library Systems", the Board prepared a brief to the Minister of Culture proposing general guidelines and recommending increased financial support. This work was co-ordinated by the Board's Library Development Committee. The proposals for development included the following: that the formation of regional co-operative library systems be based on local initiatives within a program of government encouragement and support for planning, establishment and operation; that government leadership and support for the provincial plan be balanced with local initiative, control and decision making in regional jurisdictions; that regional flexibility rather than uniformity be recognized - this means that the local needs, situation and identified potential would be factors in the development of each region. The areas for regional co-operative systems in the province were proposed in relation to the three existing systems and the additional areas where development projects are currently in operation. After formally submitting the brief to the Minister, the Board discussed it with her in the last days of the fiscal year. We are currently awaiting her response.

There are three operating library systems in Alberta: Marigold, Parkland and Yellowhead. 1981 was the establishment year for the Marigold Library System, serving south-central Alberta. In this year the management, professional and support staff were hired, the headquarters building acquired and renovated in Strathmore and initial services were begun. Early in 1982, the Marigold Board made application and received special funds to support its growth in these early years. The Alberta Library Board has followed Marigold's development with keen interest and wishes it every success in the future.

In support of systems growth and development, the Library Services Branch staff conducted a Technical Services Study for the Yellowhead Regional Library at the request of the System administration. The recommendations were well received by the board and staff and most have been acted upon.

Entrance to Marigold Library System Headquarters in Strathmore.

Elsewhere in the province, development projects are resulting in movements towards system establishment. In the southwest, the Oldman Library Project commissioned the Lethbridge Interface Study which examined the options for the involvement of the Lethbridge Public Library in the proposed Oldman System. At year's end library boards representing more than 62% of the area's population had committed themselves to the system which is expected to be established early in 1983.

The Northern Lights Project, in the M.D. of Bonnyville, which aims at developing resource sharing and ultimately encouraging neighbouring jurisdictions to participate, received its first special operating grant and hired a professional librarian as Co-ordinator.

In the Peace Country, a steering committee continued exploring the possibilities for a co-operative library system there. The committee has concentrated on visiting libraries in the area to explain their work, started a newsletter and developed a proposal to the Library Services Branch for funding of a full-time project office and staff.

A new steering committee in the Southeast area of the province also held three organizational meetings.

Alberta Library Board members Gaye Ross (centre) and Lucille Dougherty (right) were members of the Marigold Steering Committee along with Edith Helton (left) of Three Hills.

In addition, much development continued to take place on the local level. Thirteen new municipal library boards were established including one each in a county and municipal district; an additional five libraries changed their status to municipal from community library and the Marigold System expanded its ranks to include the County of Wheatland.

In light of the range of library development in the province the Board is planning a Library Seminar in the new year to review past objectives and growth and to explore future directions. The intention is to draw on the experience and insight of persons from various areas of library service and from different constituencies that are part of the service.

Legislation

The Board's ad hoc committee on legislation was very active this year. Committee members were: Chairman, Ron Hodges, Heather-Belle Dowling representing the Library Association of Alberta, Howard Platt representing the Alberta Library Trustees Association and Joe Forsyth from the Library Services Branch. The committee studied the library legislation of other provinces and states in developing its principles of legislation. A special meeting was held with Professor Lois Bewley of the Faculty of Library Science, University of British Columbia in regard to her recent study of public library legislation in Saskatchewan.

One hundred topics and legislative principles were drafted and circulated to the library community for comment and reaction. Some of the material for the discussion paper was gathered at a workshop at the 1981 LAA/ALTA Annual Conference in Jasper. In addition, there were seminars held in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, and Bonnyville. Each seminar followed a similar format consisting of discussion of the 100 topics and legislative principles. The committee also received eight written submissions.

The ad hoc committee will make its final report to the Alberta Library Board in April 1982. The committee is recommending that the legislative principles and recommendations for change be delivered through the Minister of Culture to Legislative Counsel for drafting in appropriate legal format and terminology. As an underlying philosophy, the committee, with the support of the Board recommends that the new Libraries Act should:

> "Give each resident of Alberta access to an agency which has primary responsibility to identify, select, organize, retrieve, disseminate and make accessible the record of human thought, that this agency be the public library and that to this end the library service will be tax supported."

It is anticipated that revised legislation will go forward to the Legislative Assembly within the next eighteen months.

Resource Sharing

In November, 1981 the Board convened an assembly of the Alberta library community to discuss the Alberta Library Network Research Project Report prepared by Schick Information Systems Ltd. at the request of Alberta Culture, Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower, and Alberta Education. The report proposed a series of Network priorities based upon an assessment of input received from library administration, key people in government and briefs received. It then postulated three different configurations of Network components with cost data. The priorities identified were: a union catalogue; a fast document delivery system; provision of full cataloguing data and a Network newsletter. The three recommended model configurations were: a resident provincial bibliographic utility, a non-resident bibliographic utility and a distributed network. It was the almost unanimous view of those assembled that the report had not provided a full exposition of the principles of a network nor a full range of realistic options. Finally, the assembly reached a consensus in support of a modified distributed model also referred to as a network of networks. The Assembly then appointed a small ad hoc committee of those present to meet and formulate a series of principles involved in network development and to recommend a course of action moving the Network concept ahead during the next year. We are awaiting their report and the convening of the second assembly.

Resource sharing agreements were signed between the Library Services Branch and the ten major public libraries which serve as resource libraries. Under these agreements the Branch makes grants to cover the cost of staff to check interlibrary loan lists and answer Zenith questions, for photocopies and for wear and tear on materials as well as the cost of toll charges. Thirteen thousand one hundred thirty five requests were handled in 1981, an increase of 15% over the previous year.

Library Services Branch Interlibrary Loan Centre.

Library Funding

Provincial grants to institutions and individuals totaled more than $7,960,000 in 1981/82. Indexed operating grants to public libraries increased by 11.3%, and new regulations for matching contributions from Improvement Districts and Special Areas were implemented. Arrangements were made for libraries to receive 50% of their previous year's grant in the first month of the 1982/83 fiscal year with no requirement for documentation at that time. This will permit more effective operation, planning and control at the local level. The Board will continue to review and evaluate the level of financial support to libraries lest they wither through inadequate funding.

Facilities

On October 7, 1982 the new Alberta Culture Library Services building in west Edmonton was officially opened by the Honourable Mary J. LeMessurier, Minister of Culture. The 16,000 square foot building houses the total administrative, developmental and bibliographic services of the Branch including Multilingual Biblioservice and Alberta Library Services to the Handicapped. This expansion at the provincial level was accompanied by equally significant library facility growth in many communities. During the year, 52 public libraries completed new buildings or renovations. An additional eighteen were in the advanced construction or planning stages and twenty more libraries began preliminary planning.

Honourable Mary LeMessurier opening the Library Services Branch with Alberta Library Board member Dr. Christopher Gordon-Craig (right) and Branch Director Joe Forsyth (left).

Services to the Handicapped

A Board committee consisting of Dr. Christopher Gordon-Craig, members of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and users of both Alberta Library Services to the Handicapped and C.N.I.B. established an evaluative criteria for monitoring library service to the handicapped in Alberta. They also made a recommendation that a study be commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of the services for all handicapped Albertans. The study contract will be awarded in the new fiscal year.

Meanwhile, the demands on ALSH services continued to grow and in 1981 talking books were supplied to 109 or 42% of Alberta's public libraries. The total number of patrons registered was 2005, an increase of 30% over the previous year. Total circulation in 1981 was 31,442 an increase of 84% over 1980.

Multilingual Biblioservice

The provincial Multilingual Biblioservice is another important way of sharing specialized resources. During 1981, 10,210 volumes in 27 languages were circulated to 139 libraries or 54% of Alberta's public libraries. Three thousand two hundred fifty four volumes were purchased for a total of 16,665 volumes in the permanent collection. In addition, 2,275 volumes were received from the National Library, increasing that collection to 11,675. Of the 28,340 total, 18,601 were available for circulation and 3,882 new records were added to the automated UTLAS cataloguing data base, bringing the total to 6,926.

Alberta Library Board Chairman Lucille Dougherty speaking at an Oldman Library Project Conference.

Scholarships and Awards

The Scholarship and Bursary Committees interviewed candidates and awarded both a $4,000 scholarship and a $4,000 research fellowship to Albertans. This year for the first time the fellowship went to a practicing librarian in a public library. Stephen Sloan of the Fort McMurray Public Library will be studying the possible uses of micro computers in public libraries. The Alberta Library Bursary was awarded to Jane Parkinson of Spruce Grove, who is using it to assist her attendance in the first year Library Science program at the University of Alberta.

Liaison with Other Groups

The Board held its regular monthly meetings and in addition held a formal meeting with the members of the Edmonton and Calgary boards and a joint gathering of the Red Deer and Parkland boards. Board members also attended regular meetings with the boards of the Medicine Hat, Red Deer and Edmonton Public Libraries and the Marigold Library System as a means of increasing their knowledge of these operations. Meetings were also held with the Peace, Oldman and Northern Lights steering committees to gain first-hand information about the problems and progress of these groups.

This past year the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Alberta Library Board began regular meetings with the presidents and vice-presidents of the Library Association of Alberta and the Alberta Library Trustees Association to improve understanding and promote co-operation between the three bodies. It is the Board's hope that this will continue in the next year.

Public Relations

During the past year Vice Chairman, Elaine Blakey, chaired an ad hoc public relations committee which included members from LAA and ALTA as well as the Library Services Branch. The committee is exploring the possibilities for rationalizing the variety of library publications in the province and is considering the development of a province-wide publicity and public relations campaign using financial resources from the renewed Lotteries Trust Fund if they are available.

Conferences and Gatherings

Representatives of the Board attended the following conferences:

The Canadian Library Association Conference (Hamilton)
The American Library Association Conference (San Francisco)
The Pacific Northwest Library Association (Portland)
The Library Association of Alberta Conference (Jasper)

Other gatherings included representation at the opening of the Camrose Public Library as well as the High Prairie opening. Jean Lewis also conducted a tour of representative libraries in the Peace area.

Honourable Mary LeMessurier opening the High Prairie Public Library, the Honourable Larry Shaben (back - left) and Alberta Library Board member Jean Lewis.

In Conclusion

The Alberta Library Board has now completed its fourth year of activity. It is an advisory committee of the Minister of Culture without whose support and encouragement it could not survive. The Board is very appreciative of the continuing support and confidence it receives from the Minister of Culture, the Honourable Mary J. LeMessurier, as well as the invaluable assistance from the Director of Library Services Branch, Mr. Joe Forsyth, and his staff.

The stated purpose of the Board according to the Libraries Act is "the promotion of library services". To do this fully the Board must function in a co-ordinating role to facilitate communication and to help groups and individuals in channeling their energies toward a common goal - that of progressive, effective library development in the service of users and potential users. The recent study of the Canadian Library Association, "Project: Progress", points out that we are living in an age of change and that we, as librarians and trustees, must learn to adjust to a more demanding population, the impact of computer technology, slower economic growth, and more prudent government expenditures. Public library survival will depend on how effectively libraries are integrated into the larger world. With the continued support of the library community and the Provincial Government, the Alberta Library Board will endeavour to assist libraries to meet the challenges we face.